pods and bivalves. Much of this material may have come from the alimentary canal of the starfishes, which appear to be the main source of food for *C. nodiplicata*.

—L. M. MARSH, W.A. Museum, Perth.

Predation of Blowfish by Flathead and Flounder—In January, 1972 a Flounder *(Pseudorhombus* sp.) caught by my brother, Brian Hutchison, in the Swan River had a small Blowfish *(Spheroides pleurogramma)* in the gut. A fortnight later a Dusky Flathead *(Platycephalus fuscus*)* caught by myself regurgitated a Blowfish about 8 cm long. It was not possible to determine whether either Blowfish had been taken live, but the predilection of both species for moving bait suggests that they tend to take live prey in preference to dead. Our records, kept during the summers 1969/70, 1970/71 and 1971/72 show that we have taken some 200 Flathead and about 10 Flounder from the lower reaches of the Swan. These two instances are our only observations of predation of Blowfish by these species so such predation must be uncommon, despite the large population of the pest species.

Several other observations may be of interest. The Blowfish population appeared to be lower in 1971/72 than in previous recent summers. The Dusky Flathead appears to begin its spawning run about Christmas time and this extends into February. We rarely record catches of Flathead before Christmas. The earlier catches have a higher female/male ratio than later catches and the females are always markedly larger on the average throughout the season.

* *Identified by R. McKay, W.A. Museum.*

—D. E. HUTCHISON, W.A. Museum, Perth.

Re-identification of Mouse from Dryandra.—In 1954 an article was published in this journal *(W. Aust. Nat.,* 4: 128-141) in which a number of authors presented assessments of the abundance of native mammals in various parts of Western Australia. Dr. D. L. Serventy contributed a section on the mammals of Dryandra forest, in which he mentions a mouse which had been collected at the forestry station on 23 March 1954 by Prof. G. A. Bartholomew of the University of California, Los Angeles. The animal was thought at the time to be a species of *Pseudomys*, and it was referred to this native genus in Serventy's paper.

The potential interest of this record was considerable because the only examples of *Pseudomys* sp. ever recognised from within a sixty mile radius of Dryandra were obtained by the British Museum collector Shortridge at the beginning of this century; he trapped *P. albocinereus* in the sand plains around Beverley, Brookton, and Pingelly, and *P. shortridgei* at a locality he designated as "Woyaline Wells (source of the Avon River) near Pingelly." This last spot is not now known with certainty, but is possibly along Woyerling Creek, which bears a similar name, and which flows from east of Tuttanning Reserve into the Avon system.

The Dryandra specimen is now in Los Angeles, where it was deposited in the U.C.L.A.—Dickey Collections (Catalogue No. 51,229) by Prof. Bartholomew on his return to the United States. I recently obtained it on loan for study, but unfortunately it proved not to be a native rodent but a House Mouse *(Mus musculus)*.

I wish to express thanks to Dr. Shelley Barker for drawing my attention to the existence of the specimen; to Dr. D. L. Serventy for providing details of its capture; and to James G. Miller, Curator of the U.C.L.A.—Dickey Collections, for so promptly making it available to me for study.

—A. BAYNES, Department of Zoology, University of Western Australia.

Young Mountain Duck Leaving an Elevated Nest.—In 1970 we were privileged to see a Mountain Duck and her mate as they got their young

from the nest. The nest was about 16ft. from the ground in a salmon gum. We saw the duck enter several times as the tree is not far from our lounge window. Early one morning my husband heard her making an unusual call and drew my attention to the tree. The two parents were on the ground by the tree and the mother would call, with much flapping. A little white ball was seen to jump up and out of the hole. We could hear each hit the ground quite plainly. The mother would hurry over and herd the little one in by the tree trunk and then call again. This went on until they were all down. She listened for a while with her head on one side, and then the whole family set off for the lake, with the father coming along behind. The lake was a good quarter of a mile away.

—(Mrs.) R. A. METCALF, Lake King.

Egg Deposition by Golden Bronze Cuckoo in a Yellow-tailed Thornbill's Nest.—On 15th October, 1966, near my home at Seabrook, 4 miles south-east of Northam, I found a nest of the Yellow-tailed Thornbill, *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, in a Needlewood tree, *Hakea preissii*, at approximately 4ft. from the ground.

Without disturbing the nest I walked on for about 20 yards when a bird flew past me, flying fast and direct, in the direction from which I had come. A moment later, on hearing a disturbance at the nest, I returned to find the Thornbill very agitated, and the Bronze Cuckoo in the entrance to the domed nest. The head and half its body were inside the nest but its tail and one wing spread out were outside. Both wing and tail were pressed against the outside of the nest. I had the impression that the bird was thus supporting itself.

I caught the Cuckoo and after photographing it released it. It was a Golden Bronze Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx lucidus*. On examining the nest I found two eggs there. One was the Thornbill's and the other was of similar size but was plain olive-brown, a typical egg of the Golden Bronze Cuckoo.

I think I was witness to an exceedingly rarely-observed occurrence, the egg deposition by a Cuckoo into a domed nest. The manner of so doing has long been a matter of controversy, whether the Cuckoo first lays its egg outside the nest and then transfers it in its beak, whether it projects the egg into the nest, or whether the Cuckoo actually lays the egg inside the nest. The circumstances surrounding my observation suggest that the first explanation applied in this case, as I felt that if the bird was laying an egg, whilst in that position, the egg would fall to the ground.

However, Robin Hill (*Australian Birds*, 1967, p. 117), states: "In the case of birds with domed nests being chosen it was believed that the female Cuckoo laid her egg on the ground and then deposited it with her bill through the small entrance to the nest. Observation suggests that this never happens. In fact the Cuckoo usually props herself, with wings and tail spread for support against the nest entrance, and ejects her egg into the nest."

The subject is reviewed in considerable detail by Herbert Friedmann (*Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, 25, 1968: 81) who provides a variety of instances from Australian ornithological publications which satisfy him that "there is sufficient evidence to establish the conclusion that mandibular egg placement does occur. By virtue of the behavioural pliability behind this fact, nests that would otherwise be unavailable to the Cuckoos are made accessible for their parasitism." Friedmann concedes, nevertheless, that this can be only an occasional rather than a regular pattern because "a bird nest too small to accommodate the body of the parasitic hen would usually prove inadequate to hold the young Cuckoo after the first week or 10 days of its nestling growth." One must doubt, however, whether this applies to *Acanthiza* hosts for young Cuckoos *do* survive in their nests.